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STATE FOR EAP/MLS BESTIC  
STATE FOR DRL/ILCSR MITTELHAUSER  
STATE FOR G/TIP STEINER  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FOR ILAB RIGBY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FOR H.P. PHO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [LA](#)

SUBJECT: LAOS: REVIEW FINDS NO GOODS PRODUCED WITH FORCED  
OR EXPLOITATIVE CHILD LABOR

REF: STATE 43120

¶1. SUMMARY: According to Lao government and industry as well as international organization and NGO sources, there is no evidence of forced or exploitative child labor in the production of goods in Laos. END SUMMARY

¶2. In response to reftel, the Embassy contacted Government of Laos (GOL) officials, industry representatives, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) resident representative's office, and credible international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to inquire whether there are goods produced by forced and exploitative child labor in Laos. GOL representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Lao Garment Industry Association, and the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union stressed that Laos had ratified and enforces all major international labor conventions, including those concerning child labor. GOL officials also stated they have proactively taken precautionary steps to mitigate possible negative effects stemming from an increased demand for cheap labor due to economic development. They cited examples such as drafting a "Youth Law" to "protect, promote and develop" young people and creating a statistical survey of the Lao workforce, which includes worker's ages, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

¶3. Econoff also contacted the UNDP resident representative's office and eleven credible NGOs, including Save the Children, UNICEF, and Concern Worldwide, inquiring about their experience with forced and child labor issues in Laos. Although all described the educational system as inadequate with limited opportunities for poor children to continue their education after the required five years of primary schooling, none of the sources had any reports of forced or exploitative child labor cases in the production of goods in Laos.

¶4. COMMENT: World Radio Switzerland (WRS) reported recently that child labor is used in the handicraft industry in Laos. Econoff contacted the author, Vincent Landon, and learned that his article is based on a single visit to one handicraft company in Vientiane where the journalist met one thirteen-year-old girl weaving silk. Landon had no information of a widespread problem. None of the Lao government and industry, international organization, or NGO sources reported exploitative child labor being used in handicraft industry in Laos. END COMMENT

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